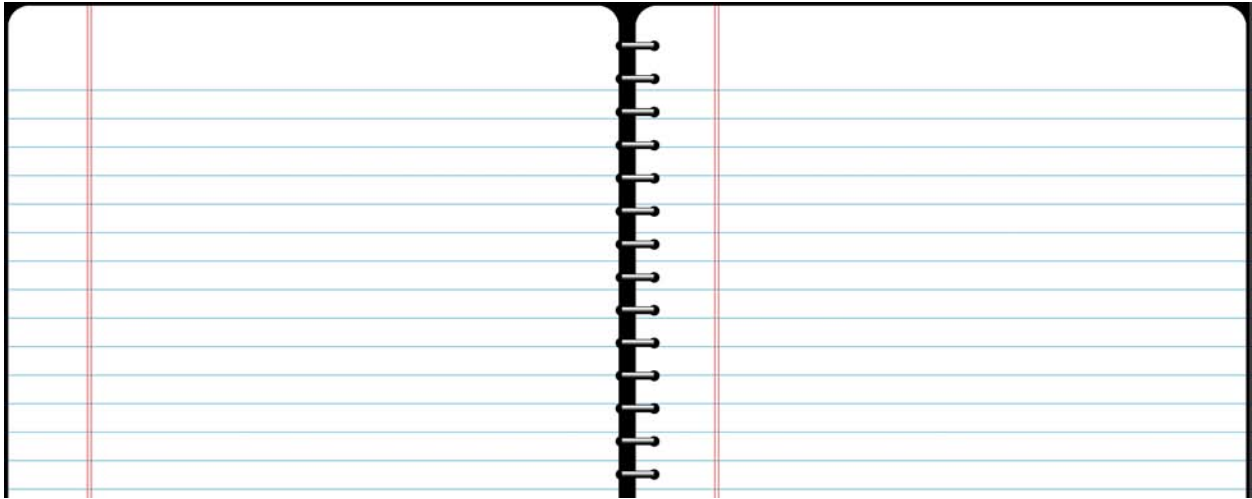


A 4th Step Notebook



Page One

Open the notebook and on the first page write your name, how to contact you, and whatever else your Sponsor feels you should put on that page. Sometimes that can include the date of sobriety, or a request that anyone finding your notebook not read it — almost everyone doing an Inventory chooses to keep their unfinished inventory under lock and key.

The Two Page Spread

When you open the notebook you have a two page spread in front of you. Use that to your advantage.

On the right side, draw a line approximately in the middle.

On the right side, use the basic red-line margin as your first column.

You will do several sections of the inventory, but under each section you will follow the same

format. On each section you work down the column, not across.

Take that deep breath again, become calm, and put your pencil to the paper.

Column One: Names

On the left side of the red margin, write the first name of the person who appears on your Inventory. Work down, not across.

Write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line, write a name, ... It does not matter how much you feel about this person, institution, or situation — write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line.

If you have someone special that you have a lot to write about — write a name, skip a line, write a name, skip a line, write a name, ...

That is not a suggestion — that is a direction. You will see why we do this in the next stage.

You will do several lists. You will list your resentments. You will list your fears. You will list your sexual misconduct.

For each section, you will write a name, skip a line, and write a name.

Some names may appear on more than one list.

When you can look at the list for 15 or 20 minutes and not come up with a new name, then you are ready to do the next column.

Column Two: Why Are They On Your List?

When you have your list of names, you will be tempted to write a long narrative of how they have wronged you. Your sponsor may decide you should write such a narrative, but that is not your Inventory. That is a long narrative of how the world has wronged you, and it will not keep you sober!

For your inventory, you need to identify exactly why each of these names has appeared on your list, and do so in a clear and simple manner. Think of it as a report — “just the facts.” What would someone in that room have seen?

You may want to tell what someone else thought or wanted. Don’t do it. You do not know what someone else thought or wanted. Even if they told you, they might have been lying. You don’t know.

Why they are on your list should be considered and the shortest possible statement will cut to the core of your reaction to them and what they did, or that you may think they did.

Here is the example given on Page 65:

<i>I'm resentful at:</i>	<i>The Cause</i>	<i>Affects my:</i>
Mr. Brown	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Sex relations. Self-esteem (fear) Security.
Mrs. Jones	She's a nut—she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Self-esteem (fear) Personal relationship. Self-esteem (fear)
My employer	Unreasonable—Unjust — Overbearing — Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem (fear) Security.
My wife	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Pride—Personal sex relations— Security (fear)

Look closely at the sample from Page 65 in the Big Book. The name with the longest reason for being on the list uses only 19 words. We are learning to discipline ourselves and this is an exercise where you refrain from “explaining.” When you write more about why they are on your list, you begin explaining why they are wrong and why you were right, or the other way around.

No more than 19 words per name in the corresponding second column.

That is not a suggestion; that is a rule. You write a maximum of 19 words per name.

What matters is your perception, and what you thought and did. Short and sweet. Keep it simple.

In this example, the one who has the most written gets just 19 words. If we are following the directions, you should be able to state, in 19 words or less, exactly why they are on your list. When you write the reason for the name being on our list, you are to tell us what happened. This column is reporting — even the phrase like “she’s a nut” might be allowed if that is why she is on your list, even if you aren’t qualified to make a determination of another person’s sanity.

Write no more than 19 words, no matter what.
Do not explain; just say why they are on your list.

Don't rush it, but don't drag your feet.

Name	Why on the list (19 words <u>MAXIMUM</u>)
Mr. Brown	His attention to my wife; told my wife about my mistress; Brown may get my job at the office.
Mrs. Jones	She's a nut - snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking, he's my friend. She's a gossip.
Employer (Name)	Unreasonable - Unjust - Overbearing. Threatens to fire me for dinking and padding my expense account.
Wife (Name)	Misunderstand and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.
Ms. Mary (1st Grade)	Made fun of my voice in front of the class.
Becky	Laughed at me in front of my friends in cafeteria. Gave me the nickname "Squirrely"
Cousin Ralph	Had better toys than me, wouldn't share them or let me take any home.
Dr. Phiro	Told my parents about my test results before telling me,

Column Three: What It Affects

Here is your chance to tell what that person, ideal, institution or situation threatened.

- Was it your personal standing or position?
- Your Pride?
- Your financial security?
- Your self-esteem?
- The way it caused other people to view you?
- Your sexual relationships?
- Your business relationships or friendships?
- Your legal position?
- Your criminal activities?

Do you have something that was affected that is NOT listed in the examples? Later in this booklet you will find a list of suggestions from the One Way Group in Los Angeles from around 1960. They may help you fill out your third column.

Affects my ...
Sex relations, self-esteem (fear)
Security
Personal relationships, self-esteem (fear)
Self esteem (fear), security
Pride - Personal sex relations
Security (fear)
Pride, self-esteem, relationships with classmates.
Pride, self-esteem, relationship with my friends.
Greed, Pride, Envy, felt I did not deserve nice toys.
Pride, fear, how my parents

On Sex

You are expected to list your resentments, your fears, and your sexual conduct. You will also deal with people you have harmed (Step 8). Use the same format — write a name, skip a line, write a name (or some indicator), even if you can't think of the specific name of the person involved.

On page 70 the Big Book says:

"To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache."

Column Four: Watch This Space

Column Four will take up the last column of your two-page spread. Leave this column blank until you get together with your sponsor for your Fifth Step.

Assets

Following the directions means following all of the directions. For your inventory this will include your Assets.

A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking complete inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade.

Page 64

The purpose of doing an inventory of your Assets is not to give you a chance to reduce the impact of your fears, your resentments, your sexual conduct, or the people you have harmed.

In the same way people may use the “Seven Deadly Sins” as a guide to their defects, it may be appropriate to use the “Seven Heavenly Virtues” in relation to your Assets. This is a simple list and may be outside your spiritual structure — it is intended as a focus for your Inventory. All of the world’s faiths and codes of ethics have similar lists of goals and positive attributes we try to achieve.

Chastity — This is not simply the maintaining of sexual virginity until marriage, but also your conduct in all areas of sex. Did you lie for sex, manipulate, cheat on your spouse, or otherwise place your personal desire over your behavior.

Temperance — This is not simply avoiding alcohol, which we have admitted to failure in our participation of our First Step. This idea is the ability to be moderate in all areas — food, righteousness, pride, sex, possessions, etc. Were you temperate in any of the areas of your life?

Charity — Did you care for others with your time, resources, and affections, or did you give to get? Was your generosity based on helping the other person or institution, or on what benefit you would receive in pride, goods, services, recognition, or reputation?

Diligence — Did you complete what you began? Did you complete work or projects only so far as your return was concerned? Do you have a long list of accomplishments or a trail of broken promises, of beginnings without completion?

Patience — Could you wait for things to turn out or did you push, become frustrated, manipulate, and demand? Was your patience complete or measured to the level of getting what you wanted?

Kindness — Were you kind to others? To strangers? To animals? To children — your own and others? Was your kindness followed with gossip or backbiting? Was it done to feel or show your superiority? Was the focus of your kindness on others or on yourself?

Humility — Were you able to go unrecognized and be satisfied that the right thing was done? Did you want or demand that people recognize your actions and that credit was not assigned to someone other than you?

Gifts

Did you have Gifts? These would be abilities that just seemed to come easily to you in the way of talent, understanding, or intuition. Did you share those gifts for the benefit of others or did you use them to manipulate events to your own ends?

If you were given the gift of Leadership, did you use it to Lead and benefit those who would follow, or did you use it to grab as much as you could or get other people to do what you wanted them to do?

If you could Comfort, did you withhold that comfort until your target gave you what you wanted, or provided something you could use to satisfy your own greed or desire before you would use your gift?

Did you have talents in areas that brought benefit or comfort to others? Music? Counseling? Cooking? Organizing? Did you use these talents to your own ends or to the benefit of others?

Was your Asset something that was a benefit to those around you, or used as a weapon to control situations and people to feed your own desires?

Use a fresh page in your notebook and write a list of assets, gifts, talents, or abilities you feel you have been given. What have you been given the talent to do?

As you did with your Names, work down the column.

Beside each Asset, write how you have used it.

The purpose of knowing your Assets is to show where you have been given a gift, and where you have abused that gift in the course of your Alcoholism.

If you identify an Asset that you have used correctly — do not try to “fix” it! Be grateful and, when the time comes, be ready to turn that asset over to your Higher Power to allow it to benefit those you would help.

It is the nature of alcoholics in the throes of the disease to injure and abuse other people and to lessen and abuse themselves in the constant struggle for more of everything. We demanded more money, sex, power, prestige, possessions, or

satisfaction. But no matter how great our acquisitions, we were never satisfied.

We take more pride in our ability to be more defective than others and judge everything about ourselves as defective.

In the Ninth Step promises we are told:

“No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.”

Big Book, page 96

Judgment

One of the most important lessons we learn is that our judgment of others, or ourselves, has been damaged by our disease. What we consider our most wonderful feature may turn out to be damaging to other people. We find that our worst history becomes our greatest asset in helping others.

At this point we not only need to work at our willingness to have our defects removed and our shortcomings corrected, but become willing to use our assets as they were intended – for the benefit of others – or to let them go.

Accepting that we have had assets, and that we have not used those assets properly is a final phase in becoming willing to have the Higher Power we found in Steps Two and Three take over everything in our lives.

Our defects. Our shortcomings. Our assets.

Everything!

4th Step Prompts

The directions for the 4th Step inventory are found on pages 64 – 72 of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. Use page 65 as a model for the inventory process. The book suggests we inventory three areas of our lives – three manifestations of self: resentment, fear, and our conduct – with emphasis on sex.

Here is a list of people, institutions, and principles that may be helpful in your resentment inventory. Check the ones you are angry with, resent, or feel ill will toward. Add any additional names that are not on this list.

Resentment Prompts — People

Father (Step)	Uncles	Creditors	Probation Officers
Mother (Step)	Cousins	Childhood Friends	AA Friends
Sisters (Step)	Clergy	School Friends	U.S. Service Friends
Brothers (Step)	Police	Teachers	
Grandmother	Lawyers	Life Long Friends	Plus others not listed
Grandfather	Judges	Best Friends	
In-Laws	Doctors	Acquaintances	
Husbands	Employers	Girl Friends	
Wives	Employees	Boy Friends	
Aunts	Coworkers	Parole Officers	

Resentment Prompts — Institutions

Marriage	Law	Mental Health System
Bible	Authority	Philosophy
Church	Government	Nationality
Religion	Education System	
Races	Correctional System	Plus others not listed

Resentment Prompts — Principles

God or Deity	Death	Adultery
Retribution	Life after Death	Golden Rule
Ten Commandments	Heaven	Seven Deadly Sins
Jesus Christ	Hell	
Satan	Sin	Plus others not listed

Fear Prompts

God	Parents	Physical Pain	Hospitals
Dying	Losing a Wife	Fear	Responsibility
Insanity	Losing a Husband	Drowning	Feelings
Insecurity	Losing a Child	Men	Getting Old
Rejection	Animals	Women	Hurting Others
Loneliness	Insects	Being Alone	Violence
Diseases	Police	People	Writing Inventory
Alcohol	Jail	Crying	Being Alive
Drugs	Doctors	Poverty	Government
Relapse	Stealing	Races	Gangs
Sex	Creditors	The Unknown	Gossip
Sin	Being Found Out	Abandonment	Wealthy People
Self-Expression	Homosexuals &	Intimacy	Guns
Authority	Lesbians	Disapproval	Change
Heights	Failure	Rejection	
Unemployment	Success	Confrontation	Plus others not listed
Employment	Responsibility	Sobriety	

Sex Prompts

On page 70 the Big Book says, “To sum up about sex: We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder

into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. Th is takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache.”

Abortion	Masochism (Mental or	Molesting	Sexual Repression
Adultery	Physical pain on self)	Pornography	Fetish
Animal Sex	Rape (Statutory or	Prostitution	Transvestism
Incest	Forced)	Fraud Sex (False	
Sadism (Mental or	Same Sex	Promises)	Plus others not listed
Physical pain on	Any deviation from	Masturbation	
others)	normal	Arson (Re: desire)	

The Sex ideal

Dear God, please help me to see what YOU want for me regarding relationships with others and my sex life.